

Presidential Documents

Title 3—THE PRESIDENT

Memorandum of August 21, 1963

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, August 21, 1963.

CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES

In order to strengthen the communications support of all major functions of government there is need to establish a unified governmental communications system which will be called the National Communications System (NCS). It shall be established and developed by linking together, improving, and extending on an evolutionary basis the communications facilities and components of the various Federal agencies.

The objective of the NCS will be to provide necessary communications for the Federal Government under all conditions ranging from normal situation to national emergencies and international crises, including nuclear attack. The system will be developed and operated to be responsive to the variety of needs of the national command and user agencies and be capable of meeting priority requirements under emergency or war conditions through use of reserve capacity and additional private facilities. The NCS will also provide the necessary combinations of hardness, mobility, and circuit redundancy to obtain survivability of essential communications in all circumstances.

Initial emphasis in developing the NCS will be on meeting the most critical needs for communications in national security programs, particularly to overseas areas. As rapidly as is consistent with meeting critical needs, other Government needs will be examined and satisfied, as warranted, in the context of the NCS. The extent and character of the system require careful consideration in light of the priorities of need, the benefits to be obtained, and the costs involved.

Although no complete definition of the NCS can be made in advance of design studies and evolution in practice, it is generally conceived that the NCS would be comprised primarily of the long haul, point-to-point, trunk communications which can serve one or more agencies.

The President has directed the following organizational arrangements relating to the establishment and effective operation of the NCS.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

In carrying out his functions pursuant to Executive Orders 10705 and 10995 and under this memorandum, the Director of Telecommunications Management shall be responsible for policy direction of the development and operation of a National Communications System. In this capacity, he shall also serve as a Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications and shall:

1. Advise with respect to communication requirements to be supplied through the NCS; the responsibilities of the agencies in implementing and utilizing the NCS; the guidance to be given to the Secretary of Defense as Executive Agent for the NCS with respect to the design and operation of the NCS; and the adequacy of system designs developed by the Executive Agent to provide, on a priority basis and under varying conditions of emergency, communications to the users of the NCS.

2. Identify those requirements unique to the needs of the Presidency.

3. Formulate and issue to the Executive Agent guidance as to the relative priorities of requirements.